

# The John E. Goode Pre-Trial Detention Facility: A Proactive Approach to Design and Construction

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**O**n April 5-6, 1991, under direction of Sheriff James E. McMillan, the Office of the Sheriff, Jails and Prisons Division, Jacksonville, Florida, moved more than 1,700 inmates of various classifications from seven separate facilities around Duval County into the new John E. Goode Pre-Trial Detention Facility. This move was the culmination of more than sixteen years of intensive planning, research, and development efforts to solve long-standing problems related to incarceration in the county.

Like correctional systems in many other municipalities during the early 1970s, Jacksonville's was struggling with serious crowding and the consequence of the courts' increasing involvement in jail operations. The activism of the courts was brought home to Jacksonville in 1975, when the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida issued a permanent injunction on behalf of inmates of the Duval County Jail.

As a result, jail administrators were put in the difficult position of having to correct long-standing deficiencies

in the existing system as well as undertake the enormous task of finding new approaches to the traditional problems of crowding and recidivism. Having simultaneously to manage an ongoing crisis and find the resources to plan for the future was extremely difficult. Our main facility, the Duval County Jail, built in 1956 with a design capacity of 448 inmates, was one of four facilities operated by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office in 1975. At the time the federal court stepped in and mandated sweeping reforms, the jail had an population of more than 800 inmates.

## Interim Responses to Crowding

One of our first efforts to respond to the federal court order was to institute innovative pretrial release programs, such as signature bonds, surety bonds,

**cash bonds,  
release on  
own recogni-  
zance (ROR),  
notice to  
appear, and  
"jail sweeps"**

(mass releases). Although these programs had an initial impact, the inmate population continued to climb, partly as a result of the ongoing war on illegal drugs.

To deal quickly with the rising inmate population, we took possession of an abandoned juvenile shelter, pouring several million dollars in salaries and repairs into this outdated facility to bring it into compliance as an overflow housing facility. Even before renovations to this annex were completed, it became necessary to turn to another facility, the James I. Montgomery Correctional Center, a county prison farm, for additional pretrial bed space. Although this change alleviated some of the burden on the Duval County Jail, it required transporting pretrial inmates forty-four miles round trip daily for court appearances and releases.

Daily crisis management to keep the population under the court-ordered cap was routine. Overloaded with day-to-day attempts to manage crowding and bring the jail into

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compliance with the court order, the sheriff directed the administration of the Jails and Prisons Division to request assistance from the National Institute of Corrections to help us

plan for a long-range solution to the problems plaguing our system.

### **NIC's Planning of New Institutions (PONI) Program**

In February 1981, NIC conducted a workshop. Planning of New Institutions (PONI). Phase I. in Jacksonville. This workshop brought together more than forty elected and appointed officials, correctional administrators, and city planners to plan an organized approach to our incarceration problems. Seven officials from local city government and representatives from the sheriffs office attended the follow-up PONI, Phase II, in Boulder, Colorado. These two PONI workshops taught us to take ownership of the entire process—from researching alternatives to housing, through selecting a site, to actively monitoring the construction, transition, and occupation phases. It quickly became apparent that this kind of hands-on overnight and attention to detail required a special team.

### **The Jail Planning Team**

A Jail Planning Team was organized and charged with developing a comprehensive schedule for planning a new jail and conducting a pre-architectural needs analysis. As outlined by NIC, this endeavor would require a project director and a three- to five-member full time staff. Recognizing the magnitude of the problem while accepting the city's economic constraints, the county organized a cross-depart-

mental Jail Planning Team. Under the initiative of the sheriff, existing staff were reassigned to create this team. The Jail Planning Team was initially comprised of a city planner from the City of Jacksonville's Planning Division, a police planner from the Jacksonville Sheriffs Office, and a correctional officer from the Duval County Jails and Prisons Division. In addition, the Jail Planning Team used the contractual services of Dr. Robin Ford, Director of the Eastern Region of the National Criminal Justice Collaborative.

During this period, corrections in Jacksonville came of age. We were committed to finding solutions to traditional correctional problems through long range planning and modern management techniques. We took a systems approach to finding permanent answers to existing problems. We started viewing our entire operation as a business that needed to function as efficiently and effectively as possible.

**W**ith seven facilities spread over 750 square miles, our first step was to assess our current operations and try to consolidate all like functions such as commissary, computer, and property systems; policy initiatives; and classification processes. Consolidation, whenever appropriate, was the first order of business. Next we acquired basic operating equipment, including typewriters, calculators, computers, and radio communications equipment. Changing the mindset of the staff so that they viewed themselves as

managers and administrators was also key in solving immediate and future problems.

### **The Jail Design Team**

A second team, the Jail Design Team, was created by adding seven experienced correctional practitioners to the planning team. To take advantage of the planning team's previous work, representatives of the planning team merged with the correctional practitioners slated to work on the operational design of the new facility. Following the well-known design philosophy, "form follows function," we knew that if we expected optimum functioning facilities, we must lead the architects. Members of the design team toured several jails around the country that were newly opened or under construction to gather insight on facility design, layout, structural impairments to visibility, square footage considerations, as well as architectural and jail administrative thinking. We used these trips as a way to validate our thoughts on some of our own design initiatives and to eliminate ideas that did not mesh with our management approach.

The Jail Design Team's years of operational expertise blended with the knowledge and experience of the project architect to create a facility that was functional for us, the end user. This approach to designing and building a jail was a learning experience for all concerned. The architect was able to grasp our inmate manage-

ment philosophy and convert our ideas into walls, sections, and floors.

Every area of the new facility was scrutinized to guarantee its workability and compatibility with other areas. For example, the inmate intake area was one section where we knew that new methods could help us achieve greater efficiency. The design team was able to design a

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staff-efficient in-line intake, transfer/release, and holding area by utilizing holding cells that were separated by glazing. Interior and exterior transfer cell doors also made for a smoother interaction between the facility correctional officers who placed inmates into the cells and transportation correctional officers who removed them for transport to other criminal justice facilities.

As the Jail Design Team planned each section of the new facility, it called on area-specific correctional experts to hone the process further. Supervisors of key areas were then charged with following through on the planning, construction, and fitting of their areas to completion. Visiting the construction site became a routine duty for all correctional managers. This process was so effective that we were able to plan, build, and bring on-line two additional, smaller institutions during the

construction phase of the Pre-Trial Detention Facility.

The design team was able to include many practical requirements in the design. For example, the original drawings included a mechanical room on each housing floor, test rooms for officers were located on the mezzanine area of the housing floor. The team recommended that these areas be reversed, thus allowing the officers access to rest room facilities without leaving their posts.

Another example was that a stairwell was originally planned to cut through the back end of the trusty dining room. The team recommended that the stairwell be reversed, thus bypassing the trusty dining room altogether and increasing floor space. From installing remote cutoffs in the control rooms for water to the isolation cells, to adding tape decks to the public address system for informational and instructional taped messages, the Design Team played an integral part in ensuring the maximum utilization of floor space, equipment, and systems.

### **The Transition Team**

At this point, we still had an enormous amount of work left to do both logistically and administratively to make the transition to a new facility and close four older units. Taking

advantage of the knowledge and experience gained by the previous two teams, we formed a Jail Transition Team approximately one year prior to occupancy. A correctional lieutenant was selected as Transition Team Coordinator, and five correctional sergeants and one correctional officer were chosen for the team to add line level supervisory knowledge to the project. This team was responsible for meticulously organizing all aspects of the transition from old to new.

The transition process had nine distinct aspects:

- organization;
- administration;
- new facility personnel;
- transition training;
- security and safety;
- inmate programs;
- support services;
- move logistics; and
- post-transition issues.

**Organization.** Specific goals and objectives were put in writing to furnish the framework for the entire transition process. In addition, all planning activities for functional areas had to be developed.

**Administration.** The administration phase involved developing a new facility management plan that described operational concepts and procedures. The bulk of the transition team's work centered on the development of a post order and poli-

cies and procedures manual. Each area, section, activity, and position for the new facility had to be thoroughly researched. Written procedures were then put into a logical sequence to spell out in detail specific responsibilities for all staff members.

Requisition of new facility equipment not supplied by the contract required an area-by-area analysis to identify the equipment needs for each cell, room, dayroom, office, and control room.

We worked closely with the news media to ensure positive news coverage and to keep the general public informed of the process. We knew that building a new facility would be expensive, and we wanted to show the public that we could be good stewards of their trust and money. In order to nurture this idea, we held carefully planned tours for

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local, state, and federal officials, community leaders, and friends and families of the employees and provided "open house" tours for the general public. Pamphlets were created and distributed to over 5,000 guests who participated in the open house. This effort was so successful that we scheduled an additional

weekend of open house activities to accommodate the public.

**Personnel.** System-wide staffing had to be studied to establish whether we had sufficient personnel to operate the new facility adequately. Consolidating correctional officer positions from seven separate facilities into three facilities required a massive realignment of personnel. The Transition Team conducted an inmate population projection study to ascertain the number of officers needed to staff the new facility.

**Transition Training.** We realized that it was critical to train all correctional personnel prior to occupancy. With the aid of the contractors and subcontractors, Transition Team members prepared lectures and seminars. Each operational system—from electronic doors to complex fire control computer systems—had to

be included in the transition training plan. Training schedules were arranged carefully to provide training to staff

without conflicting with the ongoing shift work at the old facilities. Video tapes of specific systems in the new facility were provided by the contractor to use in the transition training. Our training academy's instructional procedures had to be revised to include new areas and procedures specific to the new facility. Again, it was important to

work closely with the correctional liaison at the training academy in developing these procedures.

**Safety and Security.** The transition team had three primary objectives in addressing safety and security: to ensure the safety of inmates and staff; to maintain order within the facility; and to prevent escapes. Issues considered in formulating safety plans were inmate escort outside of the facility; control of contraband; inmate counts; tool, key, dangerous materials, and weapons control; control of drugs and medication; use of security equipment; and emergency plans for escapes, riots, disturbance, and hostage situations. In addition, plans were formulated for the emergency evacuation of inmates; adequate marking of emergency exits; tests of power generators; and training of staff to respond to any emergency Situation. The physical layout of the new facility had to be studied to ensure that security procedures were in place for each door, sallyport, or gate leading to an unsecured location.

**Programs.** In the area of inmate programs, we counted on resources already at our disposal through our Community Corrections Division. Through close coordination with the local community college and contract services with a substance abuse organization, we were able to develop new educational and rehabilitative programs. Scheduled programs were changed to accommodate both pretrial and post-trial inmates. Consolidation of programs

with our other two divisions led to a standardized schedule of all programmatic activities. Work crews for trustees were also standardized.

**Support Services.** Support services had to be considered early in the transition phase, as moving from a 448-bed to a 2,189-bed facility dramatically increased our need for these critical services. The Transition Team not only had to identify what support services were needed, but also who would supply them and how. These services included medical, dental, and mental health services; the services of a nutritionist to plan daily menus and special diets; regulation of inmate correspondence and access to telephones; management of inmate visiting, both contact and non-contact; control of commissary accounting procedures; laundry; distribution of personal hygiene articles to inmates; sanitation inspections of all areas; and other sundry services. In addition, the entire computer system for tracking inmates had to be restructured to accommodate the differences in the physical plant of the new facility.

**Move Logistics.** Issues related to move logistics were many and varied. Not only did the Transition Team have to prepare to move into the new facility but also to close the old facilities. This two-fold move plan involved numerous meetings and many staff hours. All equipment, furnishings, and supplies at the old facilities were inventoried to deter-

mine what items would be required at the new.

**We developed a plan for the move that involved over 200 correctional officers.**

From classification of inmates, to staging, transportation, and reception at the new facility, to elevator control, inmate files, housing assignments, inmate property, and commissary, every correctional officer knew his/her job and what to do. What took over six months to plan took less than two days to accomplish because it was all done through meticulous planning and attention to detail.

**Post-Transition.** Once the inmates were moved into the new facility, our job was half over. The other half was to close the old facilities. Once again, planning and attention to detail helped to ensure the smooth closure of four outdated facilities. Every item that was salvageable was removed from the old facilities, including stainless steel toilets, steel bunks, shelving, and even fencing.

**The Management Team**

Finally, we realized that for a period of time there would still be modifications and alterations to our organizational and operational concepts and procedures after opening the new facility. It was the Management Team's responsibility to follow up on organizational and

administrative initiatives in addition to arranging hands-on orientation to

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the new facility. Methods were developed to get feedback from staff concerning how well the new written procedures and equipment worked. Procedure/equipment problems were addressed twice a week at meetings that included senior jail administrators, line supervisors, line officers, and contract personnel. Through this feedback, we were able to take corrective action instantly.

**T**hroughout the entire process, our team concept enabled us to take a proactive approach to planning, designing, and constructing the fifth largest jail in the United States. Through meticulous attention to detail, coupled with a hands-on team concept, Jacksonville Corrections was able to manage its inmate population, train the correctional staff, and build for the future of corrections in Duval county.

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